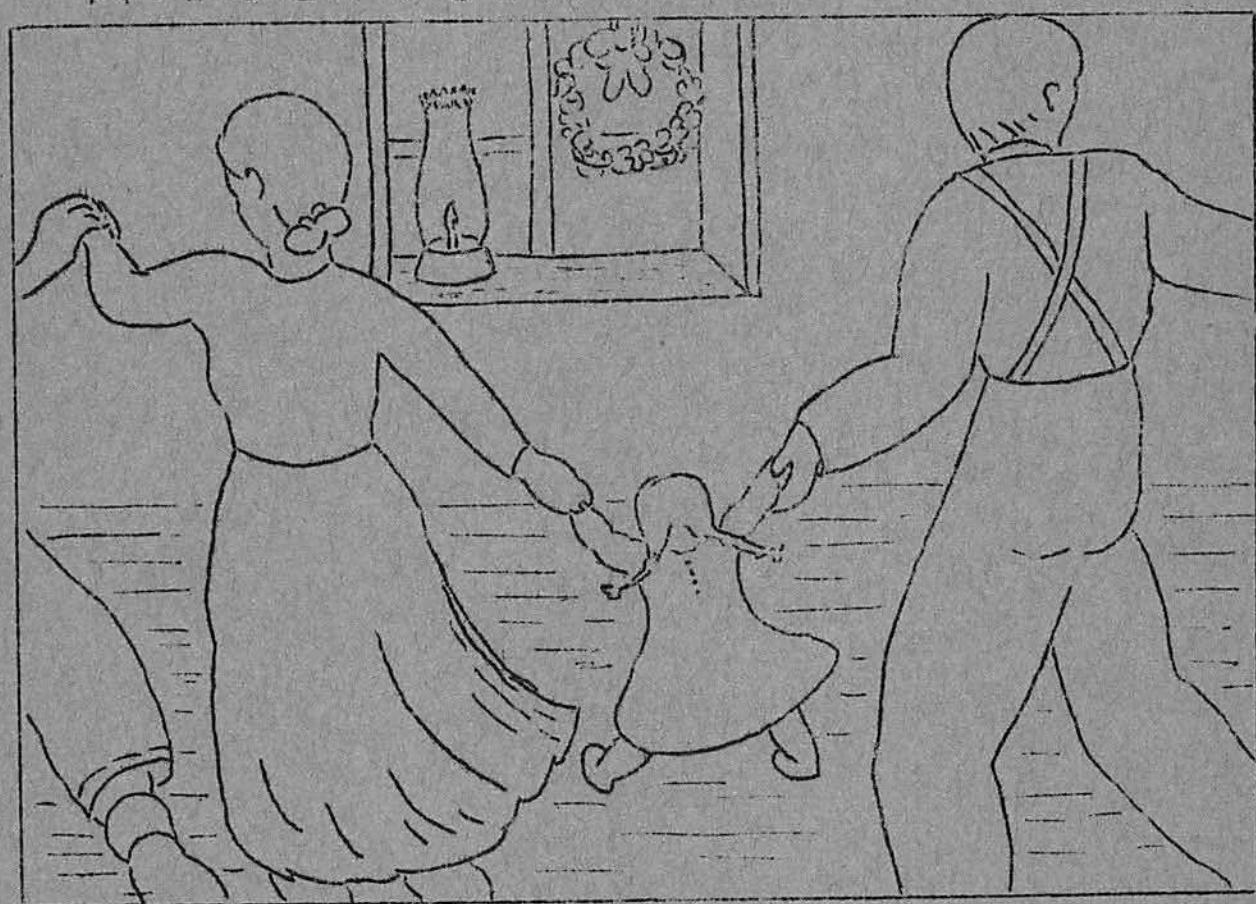


SEASONS GREETINGS!

FRAMMENTALE

A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN FOLK LORE



VOL I No. 9

DEC. ISSUE

AMERICAN SQUARE DANCE GROUP

52 EAST 13TH ST

NEW YORK CITY

MARGOT MAYO

LEADER



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"PROMENADE"

Official Organ of the American Square Dance Group.
"The purposes of the American Square Dance Group shall be to make available those rich stores of native dance, music, drama, and general Americana which together comprise American folk culture; to conduct such activities without regard for race, creed, color or social position; to cooperate with all who sincerely entertain similar views." - from A.S.D.G. Constitution.

"Promenade" is published monthly,
with one special summer issue.

SUBSCRIPTION

\$1.00.....yearly
.15....single mailed copy

52 East 13th Street
New York City

CHRISTMAS 1940

This year, when the world, more than ever, seems to be holding its breath, we wonder how it is possible to get up and say "This is the genuine thing, the important thing, that which will survive!"

All we can hope to do is to express our preferences, our beliefs, and to present the folk material which we believe is true and of value. In doing this, we hope to give a clear and complete picture of American life today - and yesterday as well! We do not wish to become pedantic or to approach our work with the feeling that only certain phases of folk culture are beautiful. For that reason we hope that members of the Group and the readers of "Promenade" will give a little thought this Christmas to all the peoples who have made possible for us these songs, dances, traditions and superstitions, who have pioneered in this country, explored it and settled it, and built these homes of ours. We feel that there is a great deal of pioneering going on today, and that a new strain will be added to the folk culture of the future, the inheritances which the present-day folk, whether they be refugees from the dust-bowls or refugees from the war-torn countries, will leave for the coming generations.

The songs of "the turn of the century" which John and Lucy Allison sing, the "modern" folk songs of Woodie Guthrie, "boogie-woogie" music, all have a place in the history of this country, as an important place as the Anglo-Saxon ballads of the Southern Appalachians or of New England. The "foreign" influences of the Germans, the Polish, the Jews, the Scandinavians, the Negroes - all of them are important and all of them are of us!

And so, we hope, you'll find time this Christmas to remember not only the peoples of this, our country, but the peoples of the world! And so - SEASONS GREETINGS!!

Margot Mayo



BOOK REVIEWS

"The Antiquer's Picture Book" by Marion Nicholl Rawson, pub.
E. P. Dutton & Co., New York, 1940. \$2.50.

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No ordinary history or storybook is Mrs. Rawson's latest contribution to the knowledge and love of earlier America. History is all too often sterile with dates, stories too often confined to plot; but here the author's medium is the pen-and-ink sketch - and a pleasing, charmingly illustrative book is the result.

Mrs. Rawson uses as few words as will suffice in her hundred pages of sketches. The pictures, themselves, tell the stories of the households, the farms, the animals, the arts and ways of life of the preceding America. Particularly attractive is Mrs. Rawson's informality. She wisely avoids the pedantry of the esoteric and finds beauty in egg-beaters, hitching-posts and corn-shellers. Thankfully we say that you will find no carefully finished, "blue-printy" drawings in this book. The sketches are rough, but how expertly they succeed in capturing the personality of each object!

To assure you that Mrs. Rawson knows whereof she writes is gratuitous. Few writers today are better equipped to supply that intimacy which is imperative in such a survey. It is precisely this intimacy, coupled with the natural charm of her sketching pen, which breathes into the homely, inanimate, work-a-day objects a vitality and a freshness that give the book its chief value.

To those who have a bit of the country in us, Mrs. Rawson will bring a touch of pleasant nostalgia; to the city-dwellers she will bring an envy and a longing for the times they never knew.

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"History Sings" by Gertrude Hazel Kinscella, pub. University Publishing Co., New York, 1940. \$1.50.

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The range of this book is tremendous, and therein lie both fault and virtue. From Columbus' "Te Deum" to Earl Robinson's "Ballad for Americans", from San Salvador to Seattle and from Alaska to Mexico, Miss Kinscella examines the growth of music. The net result is that while the book gives its reader a feeling of musical America's scope, it suffers from being spread too far and too thin.

I suppose that Miss Kinscella intended "History Sings" to be used as a text-book for children. In this it falls short. The inclusion of tunes would have helped tremendously. References are scanty, no readily available sources are indicated. While it is at once apparent that here is an enormous job of compilation and that the sincerity and scholarship of the book cannot be doubted, both student and teacher alike will find it difficult to pursue any topic beyond the scope of its treatment in the book for no leads are given by Miss Kinscella.

All the above is on the debit side but there is a credit entry of neat proportion. The episodic character of the book, while making pedagogical use difficult, lends itself easily to browsing as time and mood permit. Then again, the very breadth of the book is bound to bring to the reader many little-known bits. Designed for youngsters, adults will enjoy it equally well. And the word "enjoy" is a chief trouble. Written for study and usable only for enjoyment, the book falls between two stools.

BOOK REVIEWS - 2

"The Southern Harmony", by William Walker, pub. Hastings House, New York, 1939.

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This book of shape-note hymns carries the imposing title "The Southern Harmony and Musical Companion, containing a choice collection of Tunes, Hymns, Psalms, Odes, and Anthems; selected from the most eminent authors in the United States; together with nearly one hundred new tunes, which have never before been published... also an easy introduction to the grounds of music, the rudiments of music, and plain rules for beginners"! That seems pretty well to cover the situation!

"The Southern Harmony" here reviewed is a reprint of the original book and contains an introduction by the Federal Writers Project of Kentucky. Extremely interesting are the pictures of the Benton, Kentucky "Big Singing" and the history of this famed annual festival. This festival was organized in 1884 by James R. Lemon when a few of Lemon's friends gathered in the Old Benton Seminary to sing from "The Southern Harmony" which was "Singin' Billy" Walker's song-book. Held annually on the fourth Sunday in May, the festival proved very popular but was seriously threatened by a shortage of "Southern Harmony" song-books, so that the younger generation were in danger of losing the traditional manner of singing. To avert this disaster, the Federal Writers Project of Kentucky, under the sponsorship of the Young Men's Progress Club of Benton, this new edition was published.

Included in the pages is a complete biography of William Walker, who always signed his name "William Walker, A.S.H. (Author of Southern Harmony!). This book of sacred music was written to provide Walker with a book of his own compositions for the use of his singing schools. Before the War Between the States, "The Southern Harmony" was so popular that it was carried in the general stores along with groceries and dry-goods.

There is a fine chapter entitled "Gamut or Rudiments of Music" which contains the type of instruction found in many song-books for centuries and is important because it contained the musical instruction used in the singing schools.

And the tunes! Many of the old favorite shape-note hymns are here with their amazingly austere harmonizations. You will enjoy singing these songs not only for their solemn beauty but also because this is real music - "these fuguing tunes and 'sech'!"

Well, look at the book yourself! We highly recommend Walker's "Southern Harmony" for your "must" list.

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"Sing a Song", by Glenn, Leavitt and Rebmann, pub. Ginn & Co., 1936 \$1.00.

This is a collection intended primarily for use in teaching kindergarten music, but since it contains many folk tunes of many nations, we feel it deserves mention in "Promenade". It is, as such books go, very good, and can be used very successfully with young children. It is divided into several sections - "Home and School", "Animals and Birds", "What Grown-Up People Do" and so on. The arrangements are so simple that the "teacher" may play the piano and keep an eye on the young 'uns at the same time. It is for these piano arrangements that we particularly recommend this book. It is excellent for sight reading for young musicians and a swell way to introduce folk music to them. We think that many camp counselors would find this book useful with the "lower camp"!

BOOK REVIEWS - continued

"Down, Down the Mountain", by Ellis Credle, illustrated by the author, pub. Thomas Nelson & Sons, New York, 1974.

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This is certainly one of the most charming books for children that we have had the pleasure of "discovering" in a long, long time. The book is "folky" and true to life, that is, to the life in the southern mountains. The illustrations, by themselves, will make this book most valuable to anyone who wishes to instill in children a love of American ways. The story of "Down, Down the Mountain" is simple, and the manner of presentation is simple too. Ellis Credle has added enough mountain flavor to the language to give the book a tang, but there is not so much as to confuse the young reader (or listener). We sincerely hope that many more such books will be published, with an eye not only to acquainting the children with the ways of the people but also to the appeal such books have for older folk.

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"Mr. Songcatcher and Company", by May Justus, illustrated by Howard Simon, pub. Doubleday, Doran, Inc., New York, 1940.

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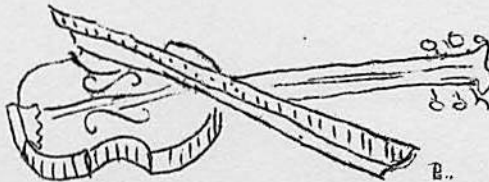
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This story and the idea behind it are splendid things indeed! It brings the younger generation behind the scenes of song-collecting and makes the "chillun" see the strong moving power behind such enterprises! There's a pretty thought! And May Justus does just that, with plenty of superstitions, rhymes, and customs thrown in for good measure. I was fascinated by the book, perhaps because I have been in many of the same predicaments in which the heroes of "Mr. Songcatcher" find themselves.

The story tells of the hunting down of the many verses of the "Swapping Song" and the adventures of a small mountain lad who undertakes the job of accompanying an "outlander" through the mountains in search of folk tunes.

As background for the southern songs and for knowledge of the mountain people, I highly recommend this book - and again, for both children and adults. There is but one thing I wish for...better illustrations! I'm sorry to say this for the illustrator has lived in the mountains himself and has a genuine love of the folk there, yet, nonetheless, the sketches leave much to be desired. Those in which only the countryside is shown, with its tiny cabins and lonely paths, are good. In the drawing of people, however, Mr. Simon seems inhibited. The book is good enough to survive such minor drawbacks!



"MERRY FOLK CHRISTMAS"

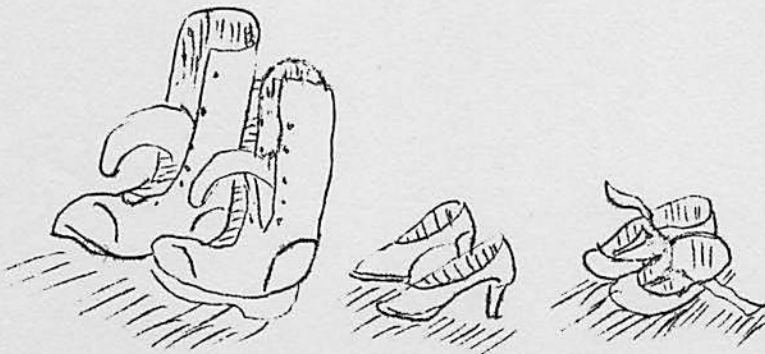
From across the sea, threads from many lands extend and become entwined in our Christmas celebrations. The people that came here from widely separated lands brought with them a priceless heritage-- their own native customs. And now our Christmas is a closely knit tapestry of all these nations.

We all say "Santa Claus is coming", don't we? We have the Dutch to thank for this jolly old man, who, when he came to America, grew a long white beard and wore a red coat with a wide belt to hold in his obesity. And how about the Christmas tree with its glittering decorations? The Scandinavians and the Germans share equally in its origin; the Scandinavians for the "mysterious lights...flaming" -- the modern Christmas tree trinkets, and the Germans for the Yule-tree itself. In England, people called "Merry Christmas" from their windows to their friends as they passed. It was this cheery custom that inspired some later artist to transfer the joyous call to paper with appropriate season's decorative motifs -- and presto! -- we had our first Christmas cards!

All this and more America took for her own and made peculiarly hers. If you had been living in the South about one hundred years ago, you would have helped celebrate the Yule-tide with many loud firecrackers. Everyone had a good time and the joyous season rollicked on for two weeks. Slaves were not worked except to cut logs for the fire and to kill the hogs. All who could do so, went visiting, some as far away as three counties -- no easy jaunt in those days, and as soon as darkness fell, the dancing began. The folks danced and sang to the accompaniment of a gourd-banjo or whatever other instrument was available until the wee hours, and when legs and lungs weakened, the story-teller would take over with his tales of the then long-ago.

The North was more sedate in its celebration of the season. To the more sombre Northerners, Christmas was a day for both work and prayer -- with a bit more prayer than usual.

When we visit the gaily-bedecked trees this Christmas-time, let us think back to all those peoples whose customs have been fused into the American Christmas celebration. Let's put our shoes all in one row -- and mean, as the Scandinavians did, that we intend to live in peace and harmony, one with the other!



"DARNFOOL DITTIES AND HAYRACK SONGS"

by

John Allison

When we were kids music predominated in our family. Vocally, as well as at the piano, my older sisters studied the classics and the operas with our highly cultured music professor.

My father, however, wasn't so stuck on polite parlor music. His songs appealed to us younger kids. He had a remarkable memory for jingles and folksy bits of Americana in song learned from Hudson river boatmen and quarry-workers where he was born at the foot of the Palisades in the '40s.

In the atmosphere of musical culture which pervaded our family, he would almost have to bottleneck those folk tunes to us. At one time he bought an accordion, but my stepmother recoiled at such an instrument, hiding it away from him in the attic. Some of her son's songs were: "Workin' on a Bumboat", "The American Boy" (learned from Capt. Pete Van Wagner), "The Girl with the Golden Hair" and the "Raccoon Song".

"Johnny Has Gone for a Soldier" he had from a grandaunt who was living at Tappan, N.Y. during the Revolution.

A man known to us as "Uncle" Billy used to come to the house. He was always a great event to us younger kids who were not so enamored of the more highly developed music. Uncle Billy's songs were as loud as the suits he wore. He looked like a John Held drawing of a sport of the '90s, hair parted in the middle terminating in little rolls at the sides. He used to bang out the

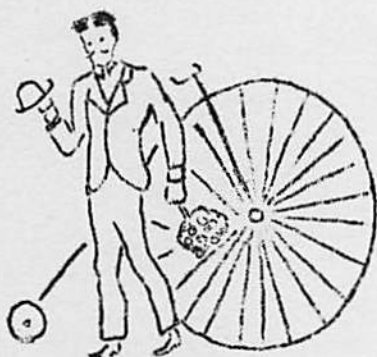
1, 5, 4 chords on the piano in the key of C. "Old MacDonald", "Michael Roy" and "The Bowery Grenadiers" -- all finished with a flourish in the high octaves.

Sometimes on summer evenings my older sisters would entertain young men on the porch which overlooked the Hudson. Among them a thin chap with a guitar would hold forth for hours in song. Many of his songs were of the American homespun type. I remember one of these called "Squire Bill and I" and a comic about two rubes at a circus. He had a lot of these things and used to do some of the famous old recitations too, such as "Jim Bludso" and "Asleep at the Switch".

We young ones were not blind to the classics, in fact I think that we understood and enjoyed them more than most children of nine or ten. But most of all we were alert to the refreshing qualities and native color in my father's ballads and ditties. We always took delight in one of Uncle Billy's key of C evenings and in what Carl Sandburg terms "Darnfool ditties and hayrack songs" of the young man with a guitar.

I know the older sisters secretly enjoyed this folk material but they were constantly bombarded with the idea that musically it was so much offal, cheap catchpenny stuff, and in the eyes of our musical professor, anathema.

My father, Uncle Billy, and the man with the guitar were, I realize as I look back on the days of single cylinders and chain drive, true bards of native song material. The turn-of-the century's worship of foreign culture failed to blind them to the worth of the folk songs they sang.



DIALS AND DISCS

Early American Carols and Folk Songs by John Jacob Niles, Victor Album No. M 718.

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This album, released just this month, has helped to bring home to us the fact that Christmas is really upon us. And it gives us a warm, snug feeling to hear our friend, Jack Niles, once more, even though he is many miles away. This album is better, by far, than Mr. Niles' first album, "Early American Ballads", although even these later recordings cannot do justice to Mr. Niles; for records, no matter how excellent, cannot bring the manner of singing, and in that manner of presentation lies the chief charm of John Jacob Niles.

In this collection, Mr. Niles presents ten songs, all of them American versions of old, old songs, most of them lovely Christmas carols, and three of them, at least, folk songs for children. Mr. Niles uses dulcimer accompaniment for most of his songs, with an "occasional relief" at the piano.

If at first hearing of these records, you are a little surprised or disappointed, don't give up. For this music, as presented by Mr. Niles, with his particular type of voice, must be heard and re-heard in order to fully grasp the rather weird beauty of them. But these recordings will grow on you, as will Mr. Niles' manner of singing.

This album, presenting as it does little known American Christmas carols is an important contribution to the fold of recorded folk music. And the pity of it all is, that some people do not even realize that there are American carols! More power to Jack Niles!

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A RECITAL OF SPIRITUALS by the Southernaires, Decca album No. 83.

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This album is a pleasant, though not too unusual, presentation of American Negro spirituals. There are, however, some unusual arrangements in the album, and there are moments when one catches one's breath at the amazing range of voice or at the unexpected harmonies. But on the whole, the rendition is of the "concertized" style familiar to those acquainted with the polite presentations of the Hampton Singers et al.

If it is understood that this is an album of the better known spirituals, rather than "folk" or "primitive singing", then these recordings can be accepted as among the best of the type.

The spirituals offered in this album are:

Swing Low, Sweet Chariot
Go Down Moses
Couldn't Hear Nobody Pray
Joshua Fit de Battle of Jericho
Nobody Knows de Trouble I've Seen

Steal Away to Jesus
Roll, Jordan, Roll
Ezekial Saw de Wheel
Little David, Play on Your Harp
Gonna Shout All Over God's Heaven

DIALS

Sunday	9:30 A.M.	WABC	Wings Over Jordan
	10:30 A.M.	WNYC	Sheep and Goats
	10:30 A.M.	WNYC	Folk Music
	2:30 P.M.	WABC	Flow Gently Sweet Rhythm
	3:30 P.M.	WJZ	Andrew Rowan Summers
	1:30 P.M.	WJZ	Josef Marais
Monday	10:30 P.M.	WABC	Back Where I Come From
Tuesday	9:15 A.M.	WABC	Wellsprings of Music
	4:30 P.M.	WNYC	Adventures in Music
Wednesday	10:30 P.M.	WABC	Back Where I Come From
Thursday	1:15 P.M.	WNYC	Leadbelly
Friday	3:30 P.M.	WQXR	American Concert
	10:30 P.M.	WABC	Back Where I Come From
Saturday	9:15 A.M.	WABC	Burl Ives

"PROMENADE" SUGGESTS FOR CHRISTMAS GIFTS

Antiquer Picture Book	Maria Rayon	Dutton and Co.
Country Dance Book	Tolman & Page	Farrar & Rhinehart
The Songcatcher in the Southern Mountains	Dorothy Scarborough	Columb. Univ. Press
Rolling Along in Song	J.R. Johnson	Viking Press
Spiritual Folksongs of Early America	Dr. G.P. Jackson	J.J. Augustin
Lonesome Tunes	Wyman & Brockway	H.W. Gray & Co.
Singin' Gatherin'	Jean Thomas	Prentice-Hall Co.
Mr. Songcatcher and Company	May Justus	Doubleday, Doran
Big Road-Walker	Eula Duncan	Frederick Stokes
Songbag	Carl Sandburg	
Treasury of American Music	Downes and Seigmeister	Howell, Soskin & Company
American Anthology of Old- World Ballads	Reid Smith	J. Fischer & Co.

RECORDS

Early American Ballads	John Jacob Niles	Victor
Old-Time Fiddlin' Pieces	Clayton McMichen	Decca

See also reviews in previous "Promenade" issues.

CRAFTS

The craft-work by the blind members of the Lighthouse is beautiful, inexpensive and well-worth both the giving and the having. "Promenade" goes out on the limb for support of this Institution!!!

"PROMENADE"

"Promenade" recommends itself as an ideal Christmas gift!!!

THANKS AND GREETINGS

Even if it seems a trifle presumptuous of us, we wish Jan Sibelius a very Happy Birthday...to Sibelius, whose music is so closely tied to the folk of his country and to the country itself!!!

Our thanks to Pat Tobias of the Thursday Group for the drawing on this page.

And to Phyllis Gold, of the Junior Group, for the cover design of the November issue -- and for her lovely full page illustration in this month's "Promenade". The more like this, the very merrier!

We are proud of the interest the Juniors are taking in this, the magazine of the Group, Let us particularly mention the item handed in last month by Maisie on the dance "Hull's Victory" -- and the write-ups by Pat and Judy A. about the parties.

And while we are at it, we're very appreciative of all the work done by various members of the Group, such as the Ridgfield dances that Bobby Fox collected....and the many other helps that we have had...assembling pages and stapling.

THE LEADER
and
MEMBERS
of
THE AMERICAN SQUARE DANCE
GROUP

sincerely wish you
a

M E R R Y C H R I S T M A S

and a most

J O Y O U S N E W Y E A R

WE HOPE THAT THE COMING YEAR WILL BE FULL OF SINGING AND DANCING !!!

